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### Demonstration of Emotional Intelligence in Ruskin Bond's *The Blue Umbrella*

#### Abstract

Literature is the underpinning of culture, beliefs and tradition. It serves as expression of reality. The ethics of life are taught through stories, fables, fictions and various forms of literature. The values learnt results in the transformation of inner life. Having this as a stance the researcher would centre on Emotional Intelligence with reference to Ruskin Bond's *The Blue Umbrella*. Emotional Intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping the lives of individual towards success. Emotional Intelligence aims to identify and manage one's emotions. The advancement in science and technology has brought in invention and innovation, but neglected moral ethics and values. This paper aims to highlight the reflections of Emotional Intelligence through the characters of Ruskin Bond's *The Blue Umbrella*. It also underscores

the control emotions, which is the need of the hour. Nurturing the children with moral values like fairness, justice, equality and empathy at tender age will pave way for a holistic transformation.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, inner self, transformation, emotions.

#### Introduction:

Literature has a power to change lives. Every human on earth are blessed with some innate skills, but few skills are gained only through practice. Emotional competencies are one such, can be acquired only through practice. Daniel Goleman states that the IQ of children is been increasing with a down fall in EQ. On average, children are becoming accidental victims of their surroundings and society. Academic education to the children will not aid a person to be successful. But application of EI in their lives will enable them to be victorious. This paper aims to highlight components of EI through the characters of Ruskin Bond.

#### Ruskin Bond:

Ruskin Bond became a writer at the age of seventeen. *The Room on the Roof* is Bond's first semi autobiographical novel about, an orphan Anglo Indian boy, Rusty. To his credits he has penned over 300 short stories, essays and novels and more than thirty books for children. This persona has become the recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award (1992), Padmashri (1999) and Padma Bushan (2014) awards for his writing English.

#### Emotional Intelligence:

The word Emotional Intelligence (EI) was first coined by Peter Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Some of the predecessor in the research on emotional intelligence like Mayer, Peter

Salovey, and David Goleman etc listed diverse characteristics of EI. Mayer and Salovey (1990) considered EI as purely cognitive ability where as Goleman model has five attributes as its bottom line that is self awareness, self evaluation, motivation, empathy and social skills. These five attributes have been categorized under personal and social competence. Daniel Goleman defines EI as the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships. In today's world, Children are given comfortable platform for an intellectual growth by parents, but they fail to groom their children to handle conflicts, sadness and setbacks. Educating EI at young age will undeniably aid the children to face life challenges of life.

#### Demonstration of Emotional Intelligence in *The Blue Umbrella*:

*The Blue Umbrella* is a good example of Bond's ability to present the niceties of life with much ease. It is the story of Binya, who triumphs over the self-seeking attitude towards life. The resolute spirit of Binya, in encountering the external and internal forces of life is astounding. Bond weaves the story with the basic human instincts, desire, possession, envy, greed towards 'Umbrella'. Binya Devi, a ten-years-old girl, hails from Gharwal hills, grazes her cows on the hills calling Neelu and Gowri. She would go often to fetch them, when they fail to return home. Binya from the hills knows no fear. She wore a glass beaded necklace with leopard's claw and it was her lucky charm. One day while grazing the cow's she heard clatter of plates and cups from the picnickers. Binya smiled at the sight of them. A lady in the gang was attracted by Binya's necklace, asked it for an exchange of her blue umbrella.

Binya took the umbrella where ever she went. The people in the village were attracted towards it. The fantasy for the blue umbrella creates a twist in story. Bond here narrates about different kinds of people and their outlook towards the tiny object blue umbrella. The

villagers envied at the sight of the umbrella in hands of the poor girl. The wife of the school master who is a graduate felt bad and wrong for poor girl like Binya to have such fine umbrella while she had the ordinary one. The materialistic longing created greediness in her and as result she lost self control. Though she claimed to be an educated woman, she was jostle down by her negative emotion. Comrades of Binya had different outlook towards the umbrella. With innocence they praised the umbrella and had a chance to hold it. Here Bond contrasts the opposite nature that is innocence of child with the jealous heart of the elders. Jesus Christ in his teaching to his disciples he says, unless one changes himself like child, he will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Advancing in age makes men; more self centric, greedy and their hearts are stained by the evils of the world. The opposite of it, is the heart of the children. They are like raw clays which can mould to the desired shape. Hence it is very important to impart values of life when they are young. Insights on emotions at the tender age will enable them to encounter challenges of life. Children who praised truly can be considered as the icon of emotional intelligence.

Bond then introduces Ram Bharosa the shop keeper of the village. An elderly man who is expected to be an example failed to stand for values of life. His desire for the blue umbrella made him to device many wicked plans. His jealousy went to extent to deploy a boy to steal the umbrella. But his plan field and as a result, he was rejected by the villagers. The children and villagers, who came to know the wicked plans of the shopkeeper, changed his name trust worthy Ram to trusty umbrella thief. He became a miserable outcast. People in village stopped visiting his shop. The alienation of him made to repent from his sin. Binya who realised the loneliness of Ram Bharosa visited his shop and deliberately left the umbrella. She did this because she valued the emotion of the shopkeeper, more than the prized possession of hers. The villagers addressed the secondary emotion of the shop keeper

and failed to visit his shop. But, Binya addressed the primary emotion, otherwise the root cause of the problem and that lead to transformation and repentance.

#### Conclusion:

Binya was emotionally intelligent to understand the feelings of others. Binya, indeed exercised personal competence of self management and self awareness, the traits of emotional intelligence.

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